

Denis Bruyere

Art & Nature

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Denis Bruyere

Art & Nature

Guy Philippart de Foy

Marc Vanesse

Sommaire / Contents

6

DES POESIES
EN TROIS DIMENSIONS
POEMS IN THREE
DIMENSIONS

10

UN LIVRE ?
A BOOK ?

13

VISION
VISION

122

ENGLISH PART
ENGLISH PART

129

LIFE
LIFE

219

REMERCIEMENTS
THANKS

À Françoise et Jean-Yves
À Gwendoline

A path of entangled passions,
New twists,
Stepping stones,
Seized opportunities,
And the desire to realise the challenges envisaged.

This desire to discover and understand novelty
comes from the impassioned people
who came before me, in the curious and unconditional love
of the materials that Mother Earth offers.

To perceive what I can create, conceive, refine
Under the approving eye
Of my wife Gwendoline and all my family,
Of our patrons and all those who believed in our projects,
Accompanied by so many ambitious young people
To whom I wish to pass the burning torch
Of my professional passions.

My objects can almost lose their functions.
Because my creations are poems in three dimensions,
Each one is unique.

Whenever I am bored I try to change
And that's why I imagine such different things...
Observing – remembering - assembling harvested memories.

I am part of a movement
That preserves technical heritage,
Respects nature,
Creates pieces of happiness to give others,
Makes work for budding craftsmen...

I detest materialized brutality, aggressiveness or anguish.
I love only beauty, elegance, harmony, the unexpected and the surprising.

The work of the workshop you will discover here would not have been possible
without the many colleagues and apprentices with whom I have worked since 1980.



Tout un chemin fait de passions enchevêtrées,
de rebondissements,
de tremplins empruntés,
de chances perçues,
de volontés de réussir des challenges imaginés.

Cette En Vie de découvrir, de comprendre des nouveautés
pourtant nées dans la nuit des temps, par les passionnés
qui m'ont précédé, dans l'amour curieux et inconditionnel
des matières que nous offre la Terre.

Percevoir ce que je peux créer, réaliser, figurer
sous les regards complices
de Gwendoline mon épouse et toute ma famille,
de nos mécènes et de tous ceux qui ont cru en nos projets,
accompagné par tant de jeunes entrepreneurs,
à qui je souhaite donner le flambeau brûlant
qui va au bonheur professionnel qui est le mien.

Mes objets peuvent presque perdre leurs fonctions.
Puisque mes créations sont des poésies en trois dimensions,
chaque poème est unique.

Si je m'ennuie, j'essaie de changer
et c'est pourquoi j' imagine des choses si différentes...
Observer – se souvenir – assembler les souvenirs glanés.

Je participe à un 'mouvement',
qui fait subsister l'héritage technique,
respecte la nature,
donne des morceaux de bonheur à transmettre,
donne un métier aux artisans en herbe...

Je déteste la brutalité, l'agressivité, l'angoisse matérialisée.
Je n'aime que le beau, l'élégance, l'harmonie, l'inattendu et le surprenant.

Sans mes nombreux collaborateurs, apprentis et stagiaires depuis 1980,
jamais l'atelier n'aurait pu présenter ce que vous allez découvrir dans cet ouvrage.







A book...

The idea for this book originated with Gwendoline years ago.

But how could I create this book about my own work, the path I followed, my passion for all of the materials I shape and the forms I give them?

There was no dearth of press articles about my work in the preceding fifteen years, but producing a book, I realised, would certainly be a project of an entirely different scale.

In December 2012 we spent the evening with friends at the home of Guy Philippart du Foy, the legendary photographer, and his wife Claire. We had just finished a tour of their incomparable home when our host asked me about my work and whether I had ever thought of sharing my creations through a book. His questions catalysed the process, and the project was born.

With the boundless energy that characterizes him, Guy Philippart du Foy began to conceptualize the book, enabled by the breadth of his professional experience in various media and remarkable skills in visual communication to clearly envision the final product. We agreed that, rather than serving as a mere catalogue of my creations, this book would attempt to portray my ever-evolving creative world.

As an artist, Guy crafts images with consummate skill and never fails to astound the viewer. Through the employment of unique perspectives and carefully-studied natural lighting and his close observation of subtle gestures, he skilfully portrayed material close to my heart.

We quickly realized the necessity of providing text to accompany the images. Who better to do the job than Marc Vanesse, my old friend and experienced journalist? Marc, who now shares the treasure trove of his knowledge as a professor at the University of Liège, took up the project with

his characteristic zeal. His passion for investigation and extensive media experience - including more than three decades' work in daily press outlets and the publication of numerous books - were essential to the success of this project.

For more than a year and a half, we regularly gathered under the scrupulous coordination of Pierre Nicolai. His methodical observation of the world of the decorative arts helped us to better target our message.

Christian Leboulle, another true friend, fascinated by the arts and ours in particular, was unstintingly generous in the time and energy he devoted to helping us make our dream come true.

We obviously had numerous documents. So many pictures were taken, by me or my dear photographer friend Erik Duckers, who did such an incredible job of capturing images, that readers are certain to fancy that they can reach out and touch my creations.

Special thanks to Theo, Sara and Tijana, our Canadian allies who helped us with the translation.

It was our good fortune to meet Gerardo Bautista, director of « Editions des Archives Contemporaines » (Paris), whose belief in our work led to the publishing of this book.

Then the time came to orchestrate the final product with the great help of Olivier Debie, our graphic designer, with whom we quickly developed a delightful affinity.

And last, and far from least, I cannot forget to thank Gwendoline, my wonderful wife, who, despite the demands of her career, always took time to encourage me and share her suggestions and sage advice.

Many thanks to everyone!

Un livre...

L'idée est née de Gwendoline il y a des années déjà...

Mais comment construire moi-même ce livre à propos de mon propre métier, du chemin parcouru, de ma passion croissante pour toutes les matières auxquelles je touche...aux formes que je leur donne ?

Les articles de presse ne manquent pas depuis une quinzaine d'année, mais un vrai livre c'est assurément autre chose.

Nous sommes en décembre 2012 et avec quelques amis nous passons la soirée chez Claire et Guy Philippart de Foy, le grand photographe. Nous venons de visiter leur invraisemblable maison lorsque notre hôte me questionne quant à mon activité. Très vite il me demande si j'ai déjà envisagé de faire connaître mes réalisations au travers d'une édition...

Guy Philippart venait d'enclencher le processus, le projet était né. Sans attendre et avec l'énergie sans borne qui le caractérise, il me présente sa façon d'envisager le livre en question. L'expérience de tant d'années au service de divers médias et une belle habitude de la communication visuelle lui permettent une vision claire de l'objet envisagé. Nous sommes bien d'accords, nous n'imprimerons pas le catalogue de mes créations, mais au contraire, nous tacherons de représenter mon « univers créatif » toujours en évolution...

Guy est un artiste de l'image et il n'aura de cesse de chercher toujours plus à surprendre, tant par ses angles de vues, par des lumières souvent naturelles étudiées scrupuleusement que par le rendu si complexe des matières qui me sont si chères, sans oublier nos gestes.

Très vite, la nécessité d'accompagner les images d'un texte adéquat se fait sentir et mon vieil ami et journaliste d'expérience Marc Vanesse n'hésite pas prendre la tâche à bras le corps avec ce même énorme enthousiasme qui toujours envahi sa belle personnalité. N'a-t-il lui aussi une expérience considérable de

la communication ? L'investigation le passionne, tant qu'après plus de trente années au service des médias quotidiens, de l'écriture de divers livres à grand tirage, il est maintenant à transmettre ses connaissances et son expérience en tant que professeur à l'Université de Liège.

Un an et demi durant, souvent nous nous sommes réunis selon la coordination scrupuleuse de mon collaborateur Pierre Nicolai dont l'observation méthodique du monde des arts décoratifs nous aida à mieux cibler notre message.

Christian Leboulle, autre très fidèle ami passionné par les arts et le nôtre en particulier ne calcula pas non plus son énergie pour aider à concrétiser notre projet.

Certes les documents étaient nombreux, tant de photos ont été prises par mes soins ou par mon grand ami photographe Erik Duckers qui souvent s'évertua à rendre au mieux les sensations que tant souhaiteraient connaître en découvrant mes créations par le toucher.

Merci à Theo, Sara et Tijana, nos alliés Canadiens qui ont œuvrés pour la traduction.

Une grande chance fut de rencontrer Gerardo Bautista, directeur des Editions des Archives Contemporaines à Paris, dont la belle sensibilité le guida vers l'édition de notre livre.

Sans oublier Gwendoline mon adorable épouse, qui, bien au-delà de ses si nombreuses idées et malgré une activité professionnelle exigeante ne manqua pas une fois de nous faire profiter de ses réflexions et de ses judicieux conseils...

Vint enfin le temps de mettre leur œuvre 'en musique' grâce à une belle rencontre. Celle du graphiste Olivier Debie avec lequel nous avons pu trouver une magnifique complicité.

Merci à chacun !



Vision

Guy Philippart de Foy



1

« Les créateurs sont des assembleurs d'idées reçues. La Nature offre le tout. À l'observer, prenant conscience de notre place en elle, nous en réunissons quelques éléments. Leur assemblage fait naître en nous le sentiment d'équilibre qui nous satisfait. »

Denis Bruyère

« Craftsmen assemble inspired ideas. Nature provides everything. By observing, by becoming aware of the role we play among her, we assemble some of her pieces. And the result brings us the satisfying feeling of balance. »

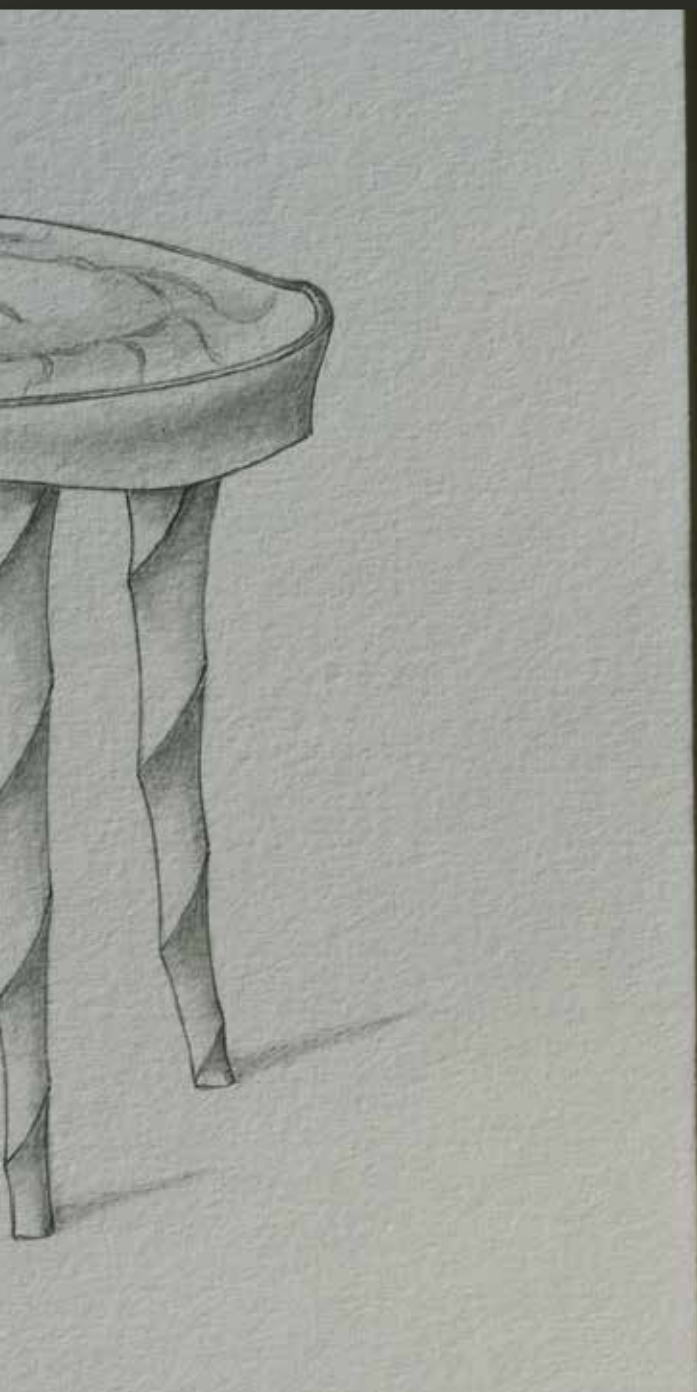
Denis Bruyère













Bernard l'Hermite; projet des sièges. Bernard l'Hermite; Chair project.

B 2004



Le Repos du Chasseur; plumier; dim. 50 x 9 x h.4 cm ; bois de palmier, érable, grenadille; 1998.

The hunter's nap; pencil case; dim. 50 x 9 x h.4cm; palm wood, maple, African Blackwood; 1998.







"Otium sine litteris mors est et hominis vivi sepultura"; bureau (détail); noyer, cuir de veau cousu; 2013.

"Otium sine litteris mors est et hominis vivi sepultura"; Desk (detail); walnut, hand-sewn calfskin leather; 2013.





Le Souffle du Grand-Duc; marqueterie pour boîtier de cornemuse; dim. 5,5 x 3 cm ; bois divers, ambre; 1997.
The eagle-owl's breath; Marquetry for the bagpipe's casing; dim. 5,5 x 3 cm ; various woods, amber; 1997.









« Quel bonheur se rencontre dans le dialogue établi avec les belles matières que nous offre la Terre ! Toujours en désir de progression, nos gestes magnifient bois rares, minéraux précieux et métaux délicats. »

Denis Bruyère

« What joy can be found in the dialogue established with the beautiful materials the Earth has to offer! The desire to improve leads our gestures to glorify exotic woods, precious minerals and delicate metals. »

Denis Bruyère









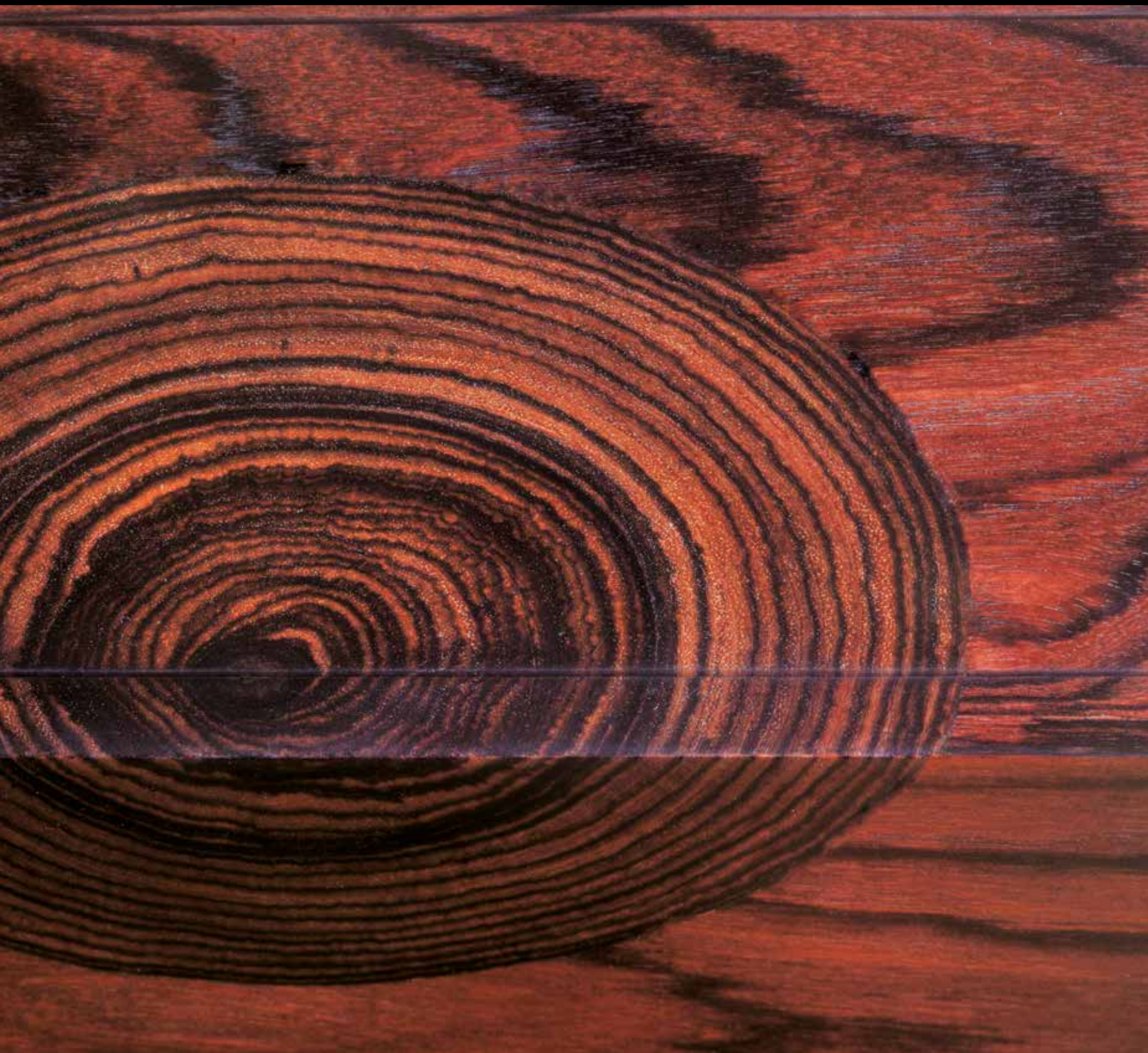


↑ : Khepri; coffret à fantaisies; dim. L. 14 x l. 9 x h. 5,5 cm; loupe d'amboine, grenadille, loupe de frêne; 1995.

↑ : Khepri; fantasy case : dim. L. 14 x l. 9 x h. 5,5 cm; new guinea rosewood, African blackwood, burr ash; 1995.

→ : La Violette au Nombre d'Or; coffret; dim. L. 12,943; l. 7,999; h. 4,944 cm : proportions au nombre d'or : $(\sqrt{2} + 1)/2 = 1,618$; bois de violette (de fil et de bout); 2014.

→ : The Violet with the golden ratio; case; dim. L. 12,943 ; l. 7,999 ; h. 4.944 cm: Proportions based on the golden ratio: $(\sqrt{2} + 1)/2 = 1,618$; Kingwood; 2014.









↑ : L'Écritoire de l'Être ; coffret mécanique pour l'écriture (détail); palissandre de Madagascar, érable ondé, 1998.

↑ : The inkstand of the soul; Mechanical writing case (detail); Madagascar rosewood, flamed maple, polished brass; 1998.

→ : Marqueterie au liseron; ébène du Gabon, ivoire, érable teinté, noyer, pink ivory; 2003.

→ : Bindweed Marquetry; Gabonese ebony, ivory, tinted maple, walnut, pink ivory; 2003.







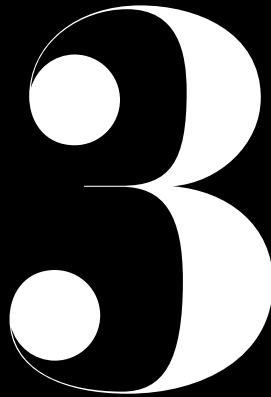


Œuvre plastique (détail); ronce de frêne, cristal de roche; 2014.
Plastic work (detail); Ash burl; rock-crystal; 2014.



Marqueterie au liseron; ébène du Gabon, ivoire, érable teinté, noyer, pink ivory; 2003.
Bindweed Marquetry; Gabonese ebony, ivory, tinted maple, walnut, pink ivory; 2003.





« La principale utilité des créations n'est-elle d'essayer de rassembler l'harmonie, la douceur, la beauté et la délicatesse qui mènent au délice des sens ? Ces objets sont des poésies en trois dimensions. »

Denis Bruyère

« The attempt to merge harmony, softness, beauty and delicacy which delight our senses. Is this not the main purpose of creation? These objects are poems in three dimensions. »

Denis Bruyère





Le souffle de ma cornemuse;
dim. 26 x 19 x 9 cm; bois
d'alizier, cuir cousu; 1995.

The breath in my bagpipe; dim.
26 x 19 x 9 cm; wild service tree
wood, hand-sewn leather; 1995.



Nullum sine illorum mors est el hominibus vivis











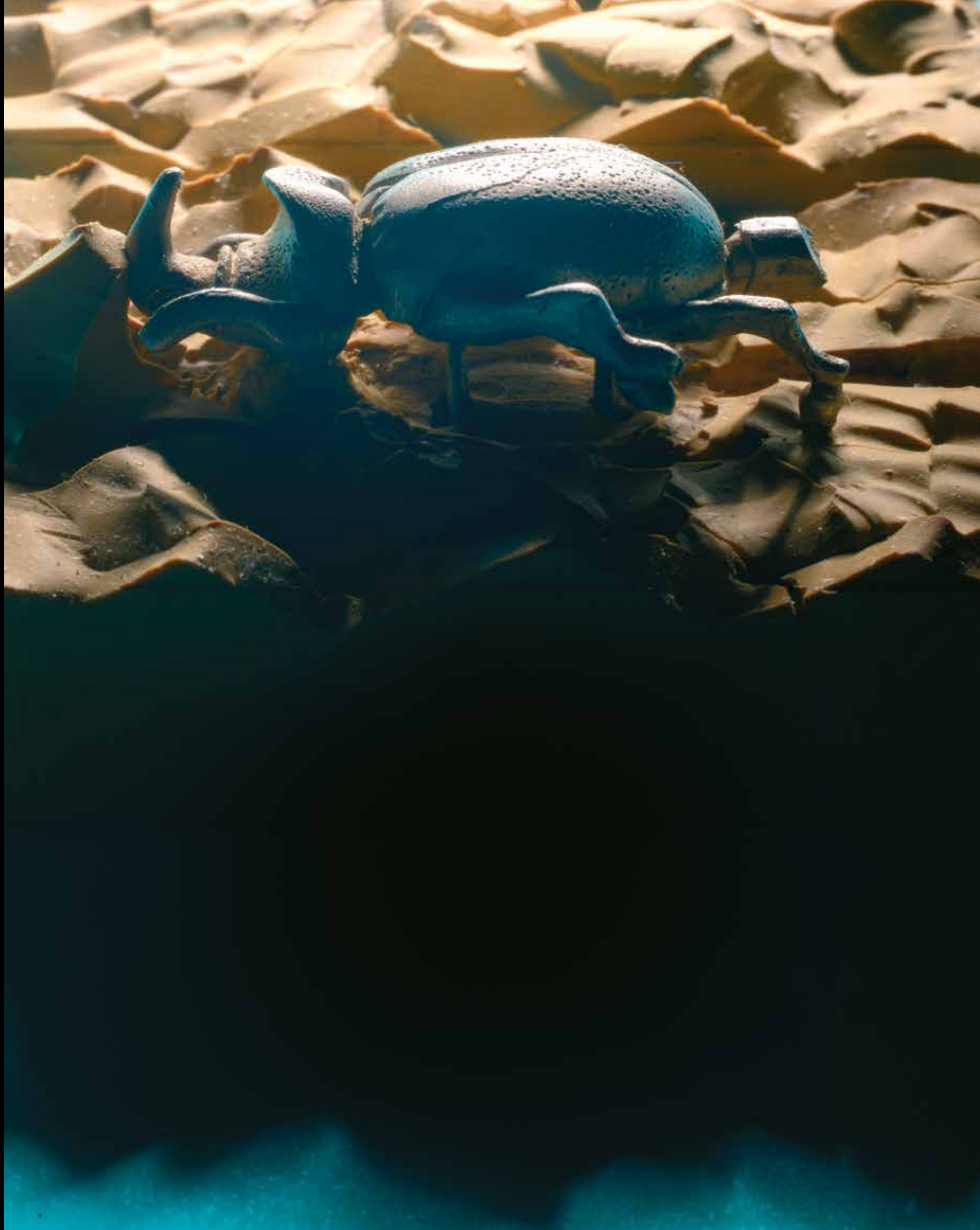


↑ : New Town ; sculpture originale pour la duplication en bronze (détail); dim. h. 13 cm; cire ; 2009.

↑ : New Town; Original sculpture for bronze duplication (detail); dim. h. 13 cm; wax; 2009.

→ : Scarabée rhinocéros; sculpture brute de fonte; dim. L; 3 cm; argent; 1995.

→ : Scarabée rhinocéros; Raw cast-iron; dim. L; 3 cm; silver; 1995.













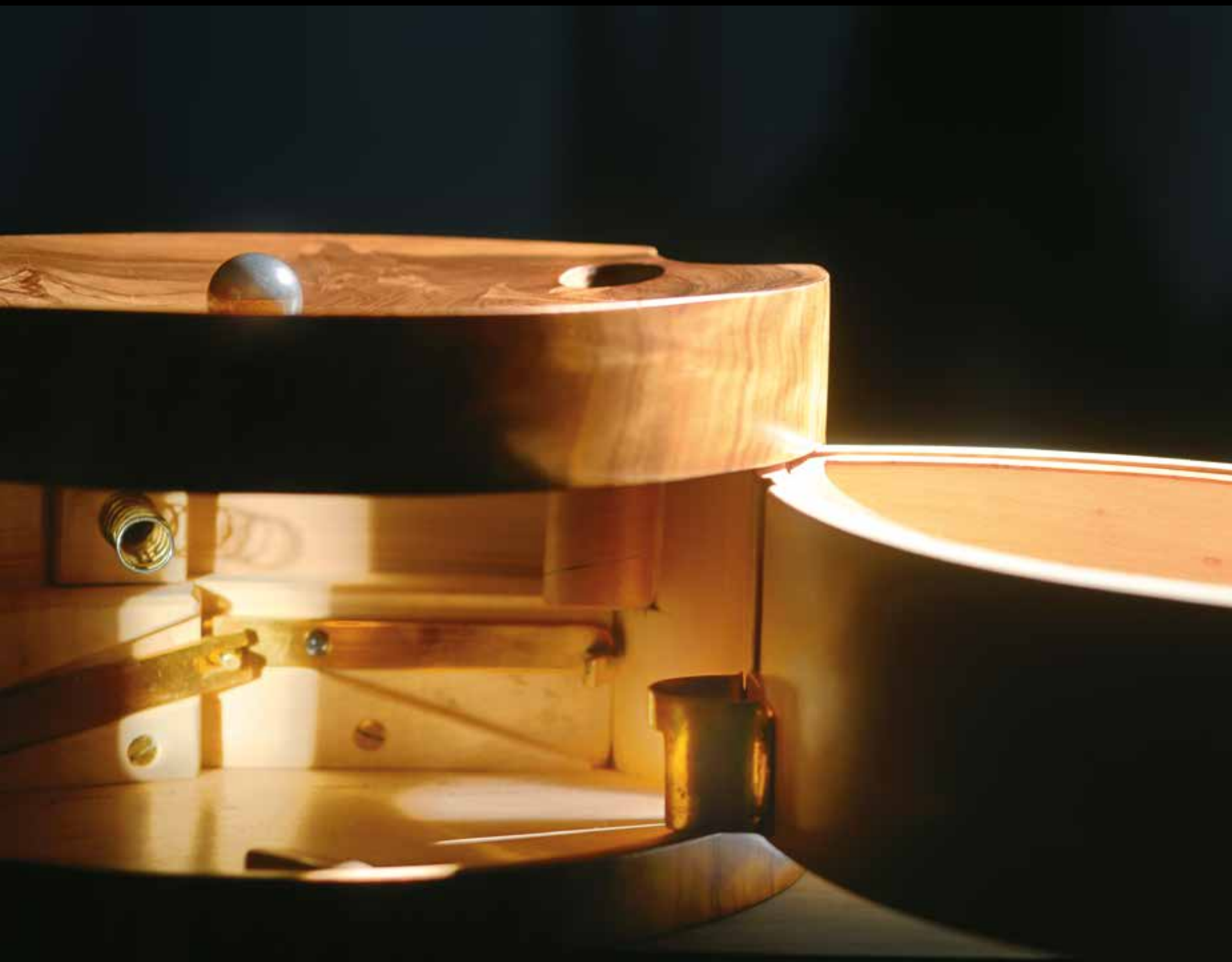


« Quelle joie de provoquer des sourires d'enfants par de nombreuses surprises ! La magie, c'est le jeu des leviers qui engendrent des mouvements surprenants. La force démultipliée enclenche le glissement subtil de cachettes dissimulées qui intriguent et attirent. »

Denis Bruyère

« What a joy it is to elicit childlike smiles with my creations many surprising features ! There is magic in toying with levers, which trigger unexpected motions. The pressure exerted catalyzes the seductive sliding of ingenious mechanisms that reveal intriguing hidden compartments. »

Denis Bruyère



↑ : Les Trois Gars; écriin mécanique; dim. L. 21 x l. 16 x h. 10 cm; olivier, érable, acier, laiton; 2006.

↑ : The three men; mechanical case; dim. L. 21 x 116 x h. 10 cm; olive, maple, steel, polished brass; 2006.

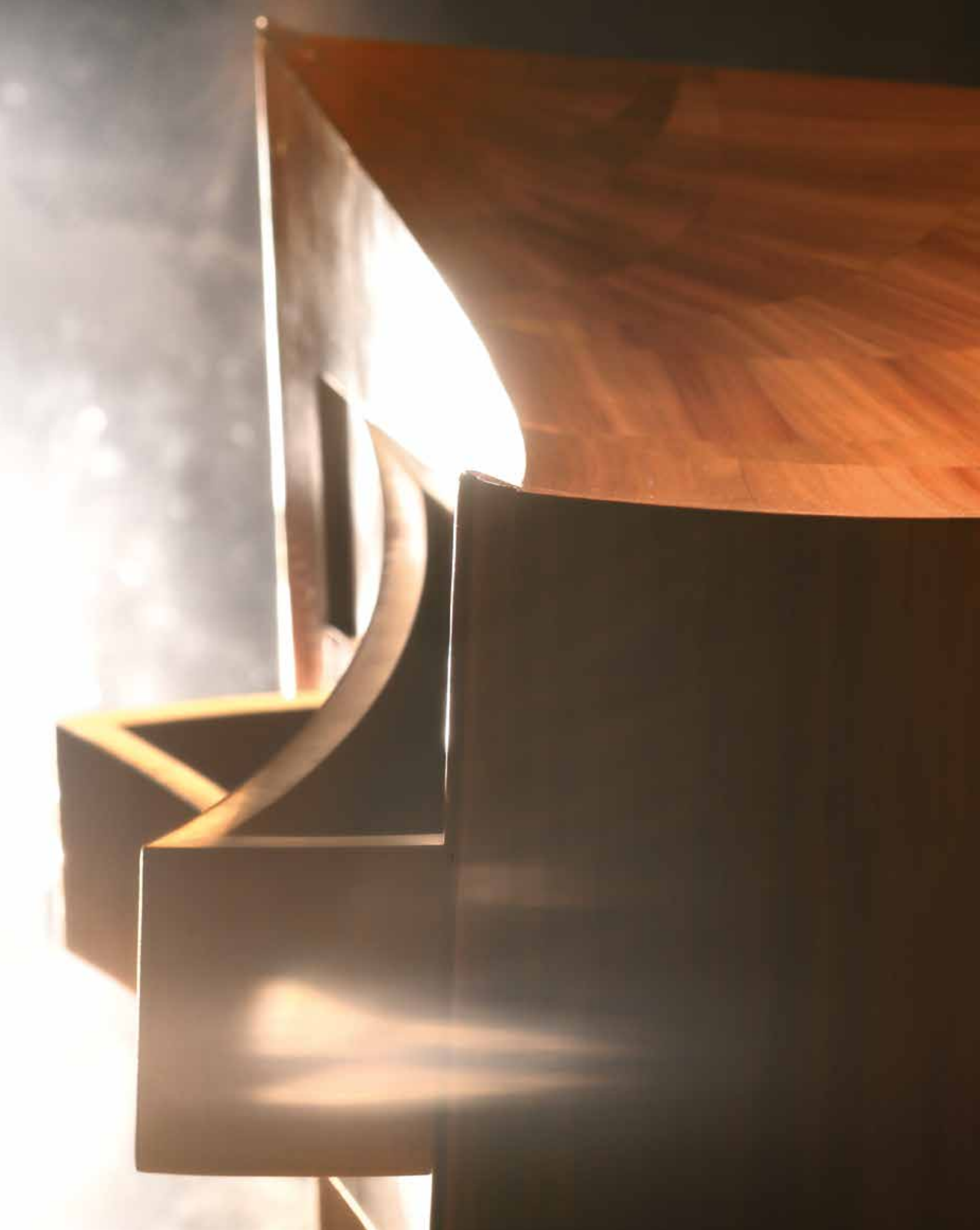
→ : Ammonite; objet mécanique; dim. h. 22cm; prunier, érable, palissandre des Indes, cocos wood, érable teinté, argent; 2011.

→ : Ammonite; mechanical object; dim. H. 22cm; plum, maple, Indian rosewood, Cocuswood, tinted maple, silver, polished brass; 2011.













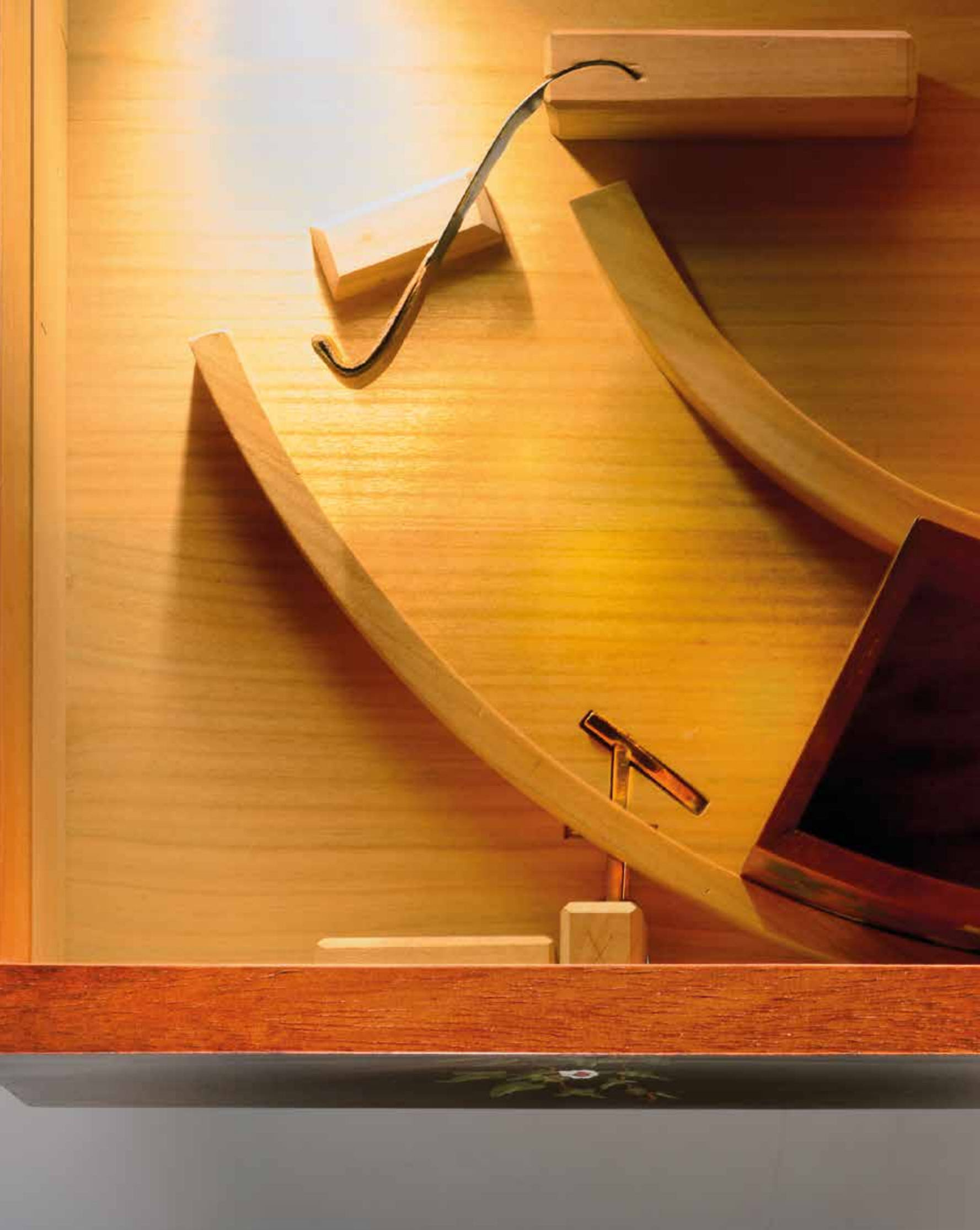
↑ : Cristal : meuble vide-poche; dim. h. 85 x 30 x 30 cm; prunier, érable, cristal de roche, aérolite; 2002.

↑ : .Cristal : Fine storage furniture; dim. h. 85 x 30 x 30 cm; plum, maple, rock-crystal, aerolite meteorites, polished brass; 2002.

→ : Rittiti : meuble vide-poche ; dim. H. 85 x 45 x 45 cm ; frêne, noyer, laiton poli, acier ; 2008.

→ : Rittiti : empty-pocket furniture; dim. H. 85 x 45 x 45 cm; ash, walnut, polished brass, steel; 2008.







Mécanisme fonctionnel d'un meuble à secrets (détail); merisier, acajou pommelé, laiton, acier; 2003.

Functional mechanism of furniture with secrets (detail); wild cherry, quilted mahogany, polished brass, steel; 2003.

Eclipse : bagage rigide; dim. L. 67 x l. 17 x h. 38 cm; poirier, cuir de vachette cousu, crin de cheval; 1996.

Eclipse : suitcase; dim. L. 67 x l. 17 x h. 38 cm; pear, hand-sewn calfskin leather, horsehair; 1996.











5

« Les travaux des anciens témoignent des modes de vie qui ont précédé notre époque. De génération en génération, ils nous ont laissé un fabuleux héritage technique que nous aimons transmettre à ceux qui nous suivent avec passion. »

Denis Bruyère

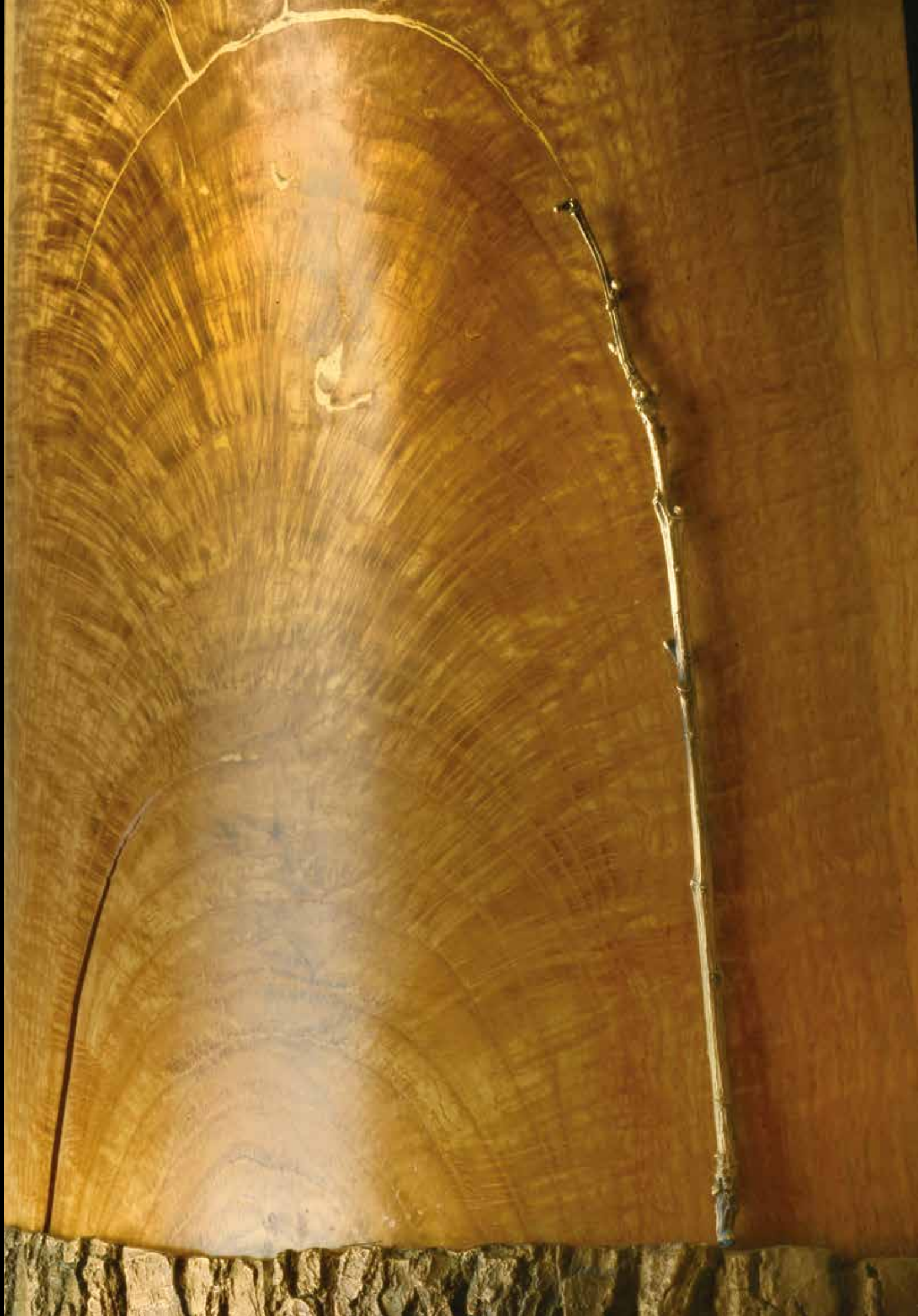
« The work of our ancestors hints at the lifestyles which precede our modern times. Each generation has left us with a wealth of technical heritage that we love passing on to those who follow our footsteps with passion. »

Denis Bruyère



↑ : Œuvre plastique (détail); loupe d'orme, fossile d'ammonite; 2014.
 ↑ : .Plastic work (detail) : Burr elm, ammonite fossil; 2014.

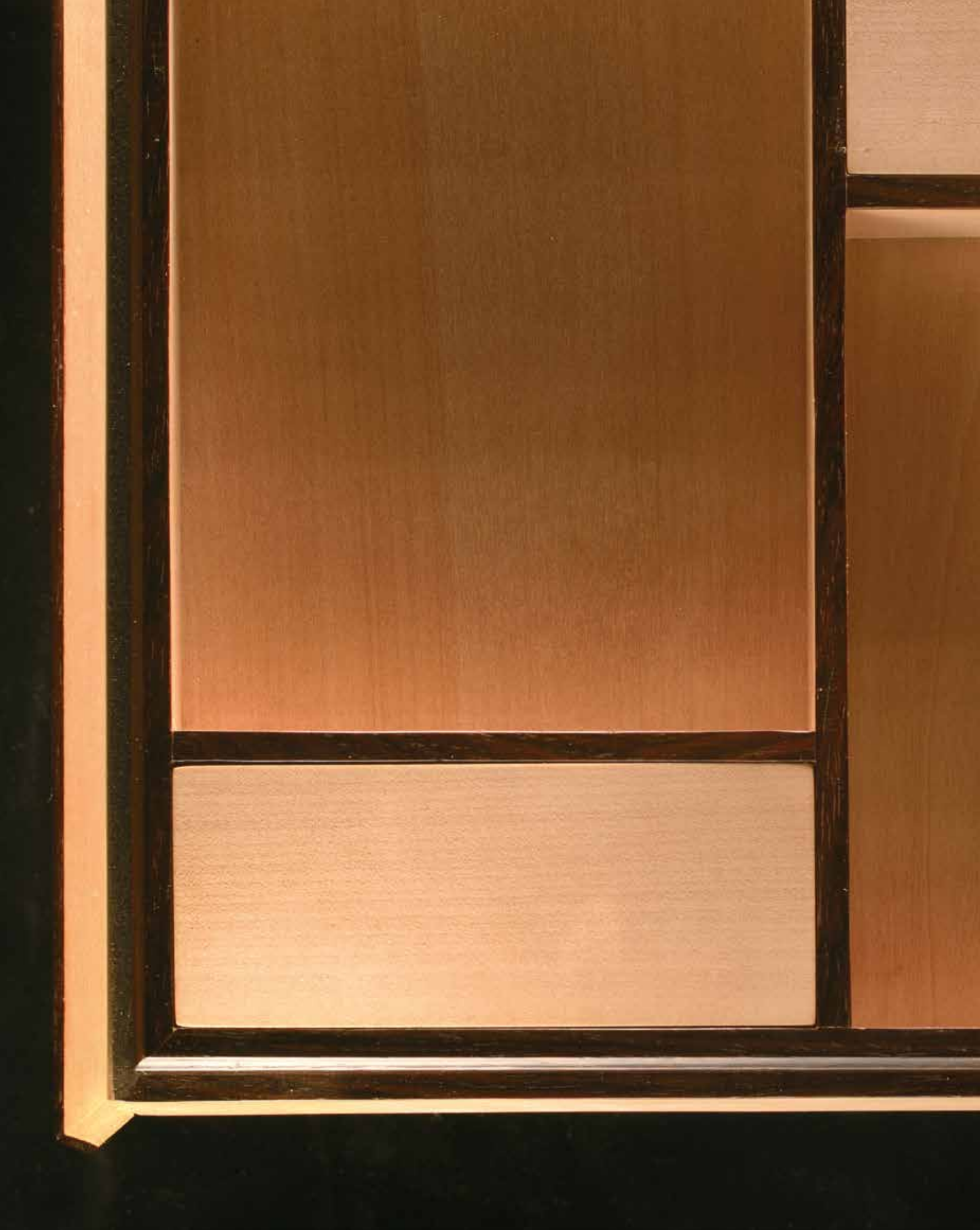
→ : Œuvre plastique (détail); ronce de chêne, bronze; 2013.
 → : Plastic work (detail) : Oak burl, bronze; 2013.





Coulée de bronze; fonderie De Groeve, Merelbeke (Belgique). Bronze casting; De Groeve foundry; Merelbeke (Belgium).





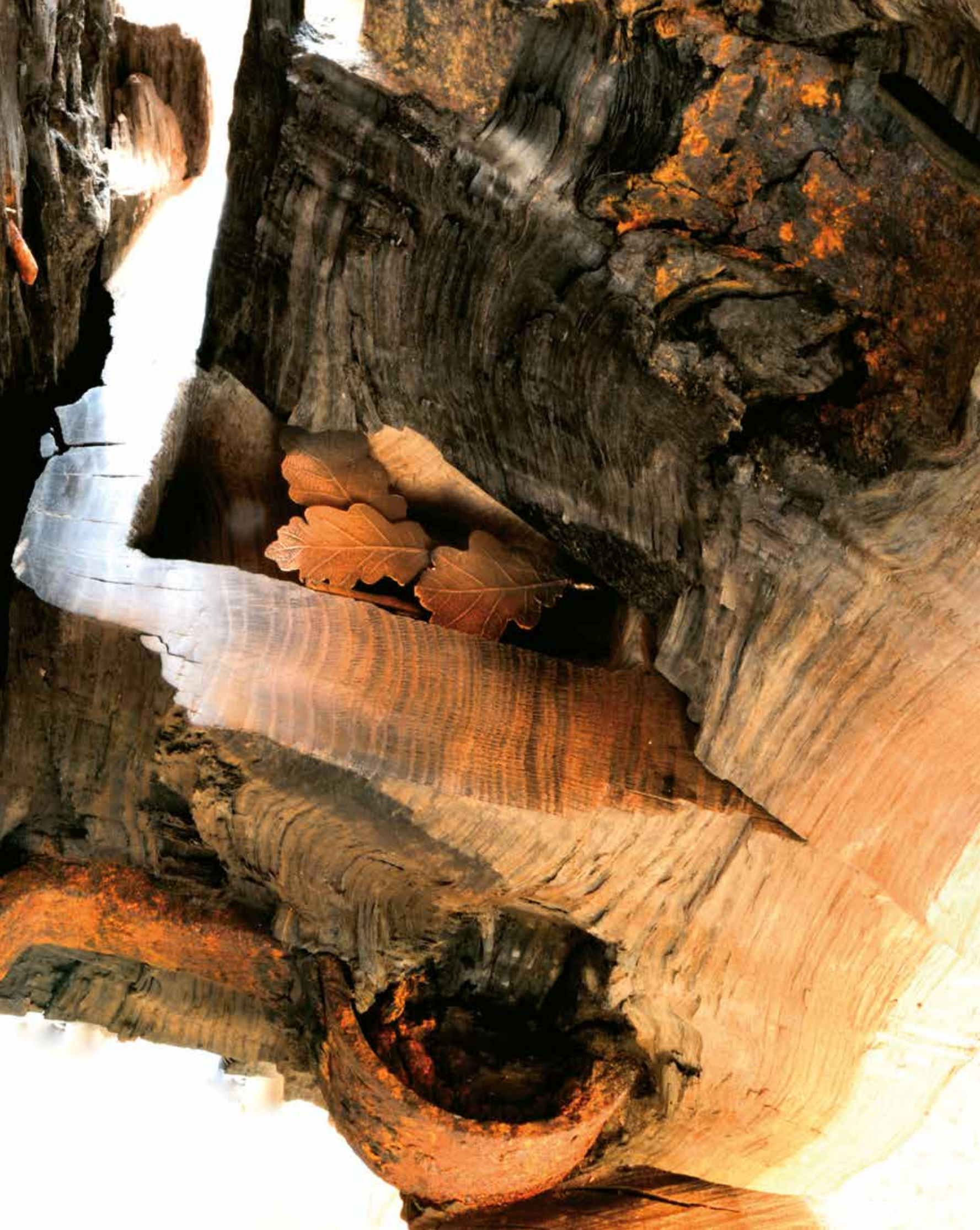


entreprendre





















« Quelle satisfaction nous découvrons dans la recherche de l'excellence ! La perfection n'existe pas, mais ne pas la chercher, c'est déjà s'en éloigner. »

Denis Bruyère

« What satisfaction we discover in our search for excellence! Perfection doesn't exist – but not seeking it, is to distance oneself from it still further. »

Denis Bruyère























↑ : D'un Plaisir à l'Autre, plumier mécanique, dim. L. 13,5 x l. 8,5 x h. 22 cm : proportion au nombre d'or; ébène du Gabon, érable, bois de violette, laiton doré; 1995.

↑ : D'un Plaisir à l'Autre, mechanical pencil box, dim. L. 13,5 x l. 8,5 x h. 22 cm : Proportions based on the golden ratio; Gabonese ebony, maple, kingwood, gilded brass; 1995.

→ : Sculptures hélicoïdales.

→ : Helical sculptures..











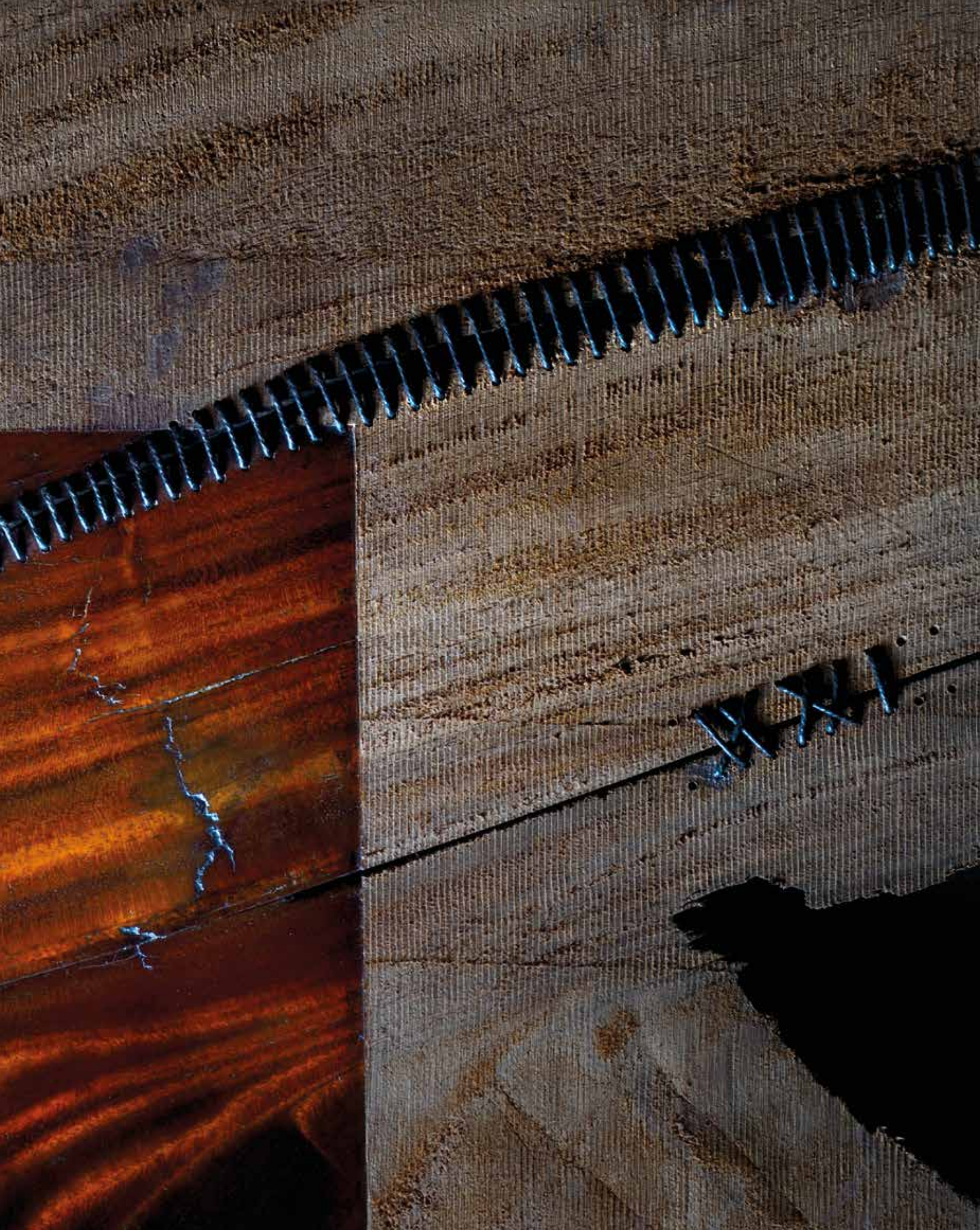
« Mon en Vie me conduit à concevoir des objets qui seront transmis aux générations futures. La pérennité me tient à cœur. »

Denis Bruyère

« My passion leads me to design objects that will be handed down to future generations. Longevity is close to my heart. »

Denis Bruyère











Karina, L'âme de Franchimont; rocher habité ; dim. 30 x 40 x h. 30 cm ; bronze, acajou de Cuba, miroir argenté à la feuille, laiton poli; 2014.

Karina, The soul of Franchimont; inhabited rock; dim. 30 x 40 x h. 30 cm; bronze, cuban mahogany, silvered mirror, polished brass; 2014.



Au temps du Crétacé; rocher habité; dim. Ø. 30 x h. 20 cm; bronze, bouleau de Carélie, laiton poli; 2014.
The Cretaceous period; inhabited rock; dim. Ø. 30 x h. 20 cm; bronze, silver birch, polished brass; 2014.





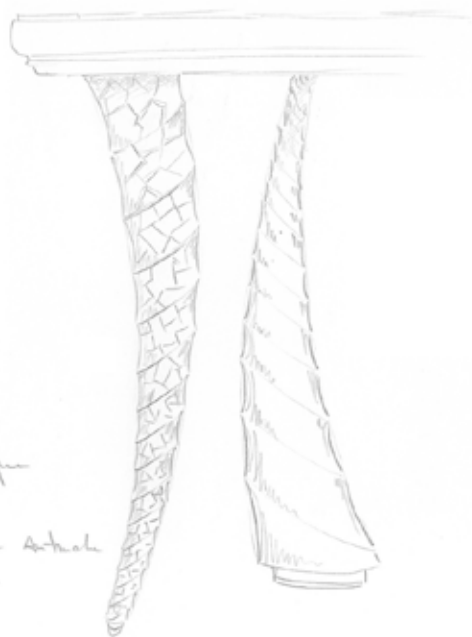






English part

« Life », by Marc Vanesse, has not been translated into English in its entirety. The French text is divided into four sections and enriched by about thirty testimonials. In it, he takes readers on a journey through fourteen years of furniture restoration, followed by twenty years of stunning creations. In what follows, English readers will find only the most notable excerpts, photo captions, and a short biography of the artist.



9
- ceramique
- corne
- verre
- coquille Artache
- obsi.

tiger
place
...
...
...

"I would later create my own tools to design objects that are close to the people and also make them dream."

DB

"A sense of duty and hard work serves as a constant existential reminder"

DB

"With woodwork, we instantly felt he'd found his path in life"

His brother,
Jean-Yves Bruyère

"He would spend days in museums to expand his knowledge. He was in his element"

His dad,
Michel Bruyère

"I was glad to leave the professorial enslavement, trapped in tradition that was too academic for me"

"Over time, the furniture that was entrusted to me became more and more elaborate. Luxurious pieces of extraordinary quality!"

DB

"If somebody has already done it, there is no reason we can't do it"

DB

"I always knew that, for Denis, restoration was not an end in itself"

Christian Jordan,
History of furniture Professor,
College of Saint Luc de Tournai

"I've always cultivated a passion for mechanisms, for both their beauty and elegance"

DB

"I saw him deeply changing. As if his shell had cracked"

Gwendoline,
his wife

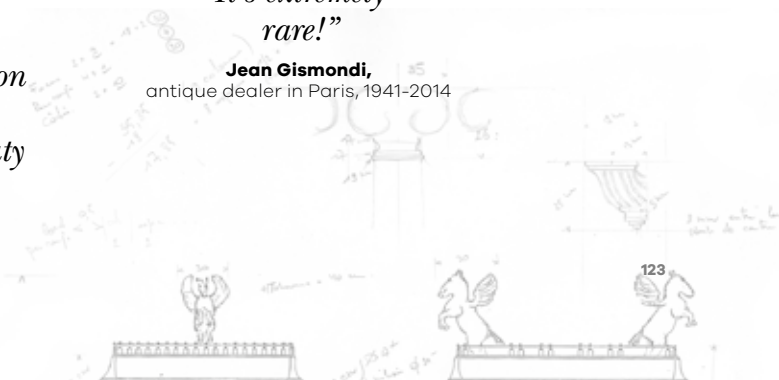
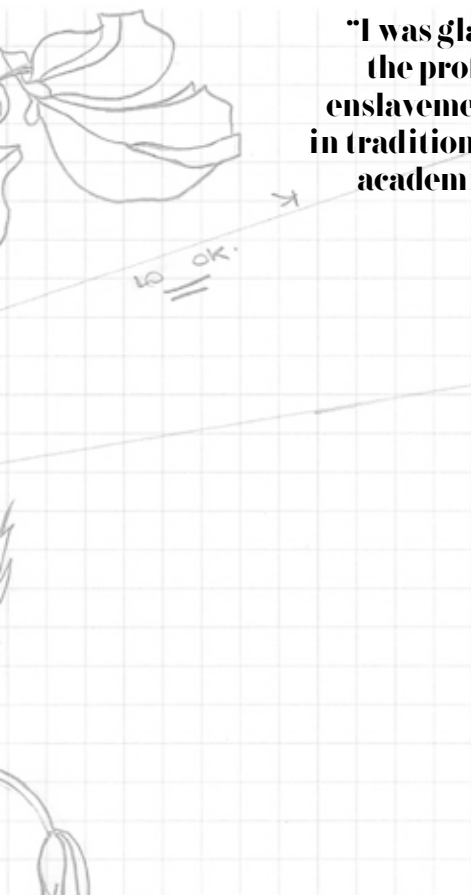
"His big aim is to design a piece that is specifically tailored to the person's lifestyle and personality"

His friend,
Baudouin Capelle

After his first two orders in 1995, Denis Bruyère creates a first piece of personal inspiration that he presents to Jean Gismondi at the Biennale des antiquaires in Paris. The famous antique dealer of the "rue royale" is delighted by his work and offers him to exhibit his art in one of his galleries during the following year.

"You have the technique of Germans and the sun of Italians. It's extremely rare!"

Jean Gismondi,
antique dealer in Paris, 1941-2014





"My work is to materialize the perception of their desires"

DB

"What I offer are functional art pieces. Poems made of materials. Odes to harmony, delicacy and the sense of touch"

DB

"He handled aesthetic, inventiveness and creative madness"

Luc Delfosse,
writer, journalist
and friend

"Little by little, by touching and smelling, the object reveals its mysteries. He is a genius craftsman with a flow of creative ideas. Nature has not been betrayed, she is revealed through another aspect; she was not imprisoned but magnified with respect"

Marc Lejeune,
antique dealer and decorator



"I was suddenly taken over by an incredible emotion that overwhelmed me. Denis's work always amazes and surprises"

Thierry Collard,
his collector friend

"I have a customer who is looking for an original piece of furniture. Something technical and elegant that she would install in Nassau, in her paradisiac property in the Bahamas.

I didn't know that somebody existed in this day and age who was still able to create objects of this quality. By discovering his work, I understood what former royalty must have felt when they received their special commissions."

Carlton Hobbs,
Antique dealer in New York

"In the line of the great cabinet makers of the XVIII century.

Denis adds to his creations and furniture his poetic aspect that fits better our present era"

Serge Miessen,
Antique dealer
and gallery owner in Brussels

"There is something magical. Few people in Europe and in the world can do what he does. It's about exceptional work with avant-gardists ideas. There is no doubt I found the best one!"

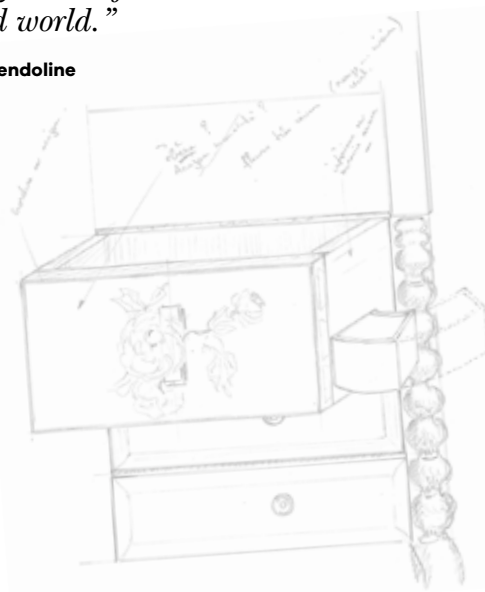
Erik Duckers,
photographer and friend

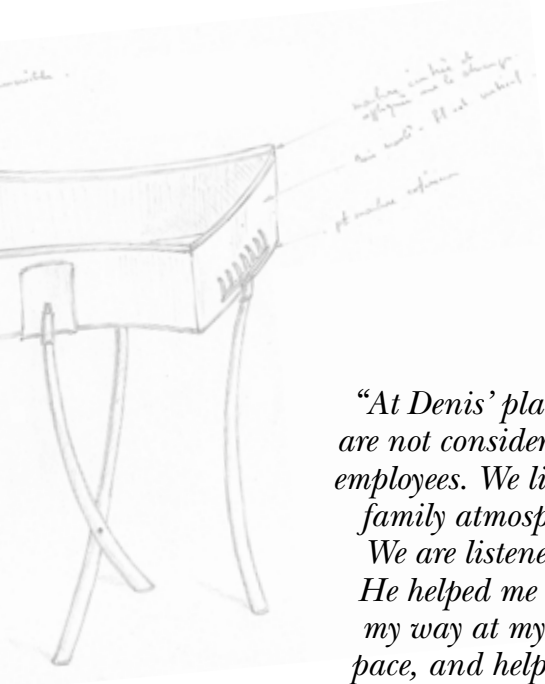
"In his workshop are tools, music, the smell of wax, oil and heat treated wood"

Kevin Lambrechts

"His clients purchase time, a very precious commodity in our fast-paced world."

Gwendoline





“At Denis’ place, we are not considered just employees. We live in a family atmosphere. We are listened to. He helped me make my way at my own pace, and helped me discover my passion. He is not only a cabinet maker, he can do anything. Sculptures, welding, glasswork, bronze, mechanics... It’s truly impressive!”

Kevin Lambrechts, one of his former cabinet maker apprentice

“Perfection is the child of difficulties overcome”

DB

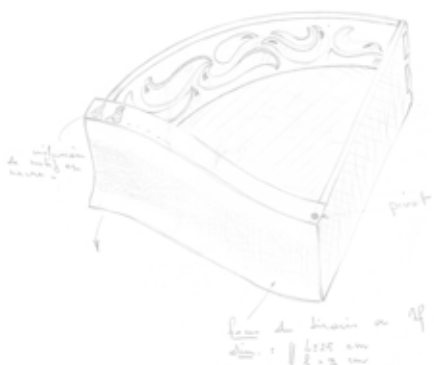
“We chose the unicorn. This mythical animal of our childhood. This timeless dream creature combines strength and sweetness, robustness and delicacy. Dare to get off the beaten path! Dare to express your personality! Dare to create your own dreams!”

Gwendoline



“You should try the plastic arts”

Christian Leboulle, his friend and collector of contemporary art



“I share all my knowledge without any secrecy. Secrecy is ridiculous”

DB

“Dad also taught me the importance of reflecting –rather than only following intuition. Whenever I watched him in his workshop, I felt he was so absorbed in what he was doing”

Loïc Bruyère, his son

“Never stop the journey!”

Marie-Eve Compère, friend and kindergarten teacher of their five children



“He liked it very much when my friends came by to see him in his workshop. They were amazed by his work and he was delighted by their visits.”

Danaé, Denis’ daughter

“Americans couldn’t believe it when they discovered his creations!”

Justine Amory, Gwendoline’s daughter

“Our souls met Denis always searches! He is seeking a truth. He is idealistic and realistic at the same time! Always with this perfect ambivalence”

Fernand Henry, his doctor and friend

“Like me, he uses ancient techniques to create contemporary work. Our ideas match”

Dominique Thomas, organ builder and friend

“Living his project, each of us with what makes us unique but also living and sharing common adventures. He also loves staging his work. He enjoys playfulness and the art of surprising”

Gwendoline

Biography



Denis Bruyère (born October 1957 in Liège), is a Belgian master craftsman, designer, restorer, cabinet maker and wood specialist. He is known for creating timeless, unique objects and furniture with secret drawers and mechanical fittings.

An unorthodox start

Denis Bruyère's unorthodox career started at the end of the 1970s. Born into a family of engineers, he began both law school and design college, but soon realized that mass produced items were not for him. After attending courses in cabinetmaking and studying the work of master craftsmen, he developed a strong interest in preserving a technical heritage and began restoring old furniture.

The restoring path

During the 1980s, Denis Bruyère was given an increasing number of restoration jobs and frequently travelled throughout Europe, where he became known for meticulously respecting original techniques in restoring each piece. It was also during this time that he opened his own workshop and began to restore both important furniture from private customers and exhibition furniture from museums and internationally-known organizations. Most of this furniture required over a thousand hours of work. An office shelf once owned by King Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette of France and another owned by German cabinet-maker David Roentgen figure among the prestigious pieces he has restored.



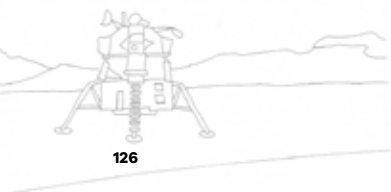
From restorer to creator

The 1990s were a crucial decade in Denis Bruyère's career. Being aware that traditional methods preserve artistic heritage, Denis decided to apply the techniques learned during his restoration years to the creation of unique contemporary objects. This natural evolution brought him to design what he calls "objects with a soul". From an ornamental jewellery box to a cigar case and a secret desk drawer, all his creations share precious material and perfect technique. Denis understands the feeling or desire hidden behind the simple object. He usually adds mystery by creating a secret opening mechanism to emphasize his magical universe. The precision of his work led him to exhibit his masterpieces both in Belgium and internationally and to rapidly gain a reputation as the "goldsmith of wood".

Masterpieces

Bernard-l'Hermite (2002-2003)

In the early 2000s, Christopher Payne, the BBC fine art consultant and director of the Furniture Department at Sotheby's London, tracked Denis down in Paris and asked him to design an extraordinary piece of furniture for Jane Lewis, wife of the famous antique collector Joe Lewis. Desiring an exceptional contemporary piece, she asked Denis to create a desk for her residence in the Bahamas. Her only instruction was that she liked crazy furniture with no straight lines. Since the desk would face the ocean, Denis drew his inspiration from the marine elements. This project took a year to complete and has been his longest to date. The gallery where the desk was later exhibited valued the piece at more than 100.000€.





New Town (2004-2010)

Denis was once again working through Christopher Payne, this time for an Irish family. The monumental project started when he was asked to build a library for their castle. After months of brainstorming and research, Denis suggested the bold idea of fifteen indoor buildings that would give the impression of walking in New York City or Chicago. Curious about this surreal idea, the Irish family gave him carte blanche. It took Denis six years to build the sculpted towers, principally from wood but also from glass, stone and metal. Each of the towers has its own meaning and tells a different but complementary story. The towers are now set in one of the halls of the castle.

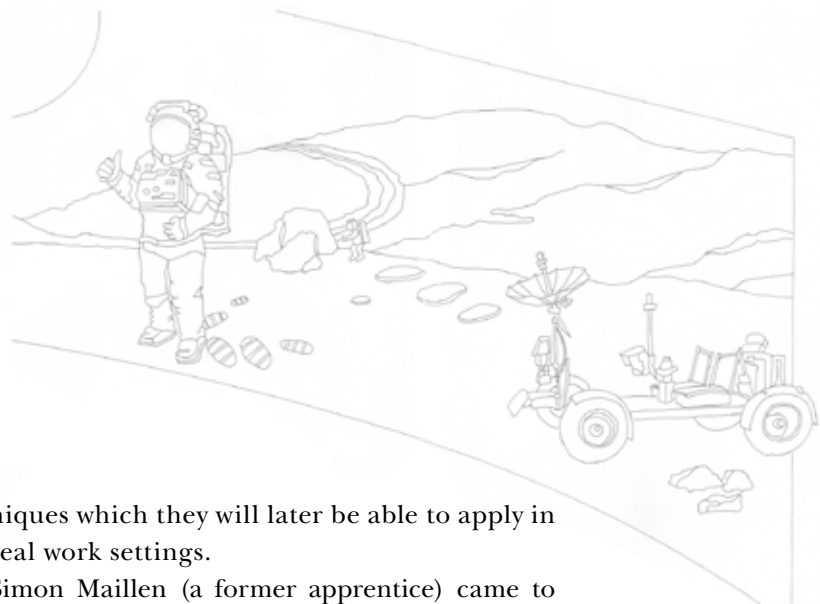
The workshop

Denis opened his first workshop in 1980. As the years went by, his projects became bigger and thus his need for space. In 2005 he extended the existing atelier in his home in the tiny village of Sassor in Theux to be able to complete the New Town project.

There, Denis brings together a great range of workmanship traditions: hewers of wood, carpenters, cabinet makers, sculptors, bronze- and black-smiths, tin makers, master glassmakers, painters, and lighting designers.

Denis also has a passion and taste for simple things. His work directly addresses everyone, from the extravagant to the humble as long as they honor the principles of excellence and savoir-faire.

The workshop offers training that allows apprentices to review different furniture styles and express their creativity through tech-



niques which they will later be able to apply in real work settings.

Simon Maillen (a former apprentice) came to the Sassor Workshop in 2007 and received three years of training. He describes his experience as “a wonderful journey where I learned the craft by diving into each project, especially with New Town. This monumental piece required several years of work and allowed me to discover a large range of techniques.”

Denis Bruyère employs a variety of materials – precious yet sober, noble and durable. When necessary, he also imagines and builds new tools and applies unpublished working methods in order to achieve the desired result.

The same is true for the non-wooden pieces he uses in his creations. In a spirit of excellence and harmony and in order to maintain magic, he prefers inventing and designing these pieces himself instead of drawing from existing unsuitable ones.

Denis currently only works on projects ordered by customers and spends the majority of his time creating unique works of art.

Denis’ mission is to pass on the beauty of woodwork to younger generations and to motivate them to do the same. One of his next projects is to create a “woodwork school of life” where he will teach the pleasure of working combined with humanism. He also wants to make sure that each of his students is able to express their ideas and be heard. Without a doubt his students’ innovative ideas will be integrated into his work.

